THE SURGEON IN THE MIRROR

ROBOTIC SURGEON SERIES: BOOK 1

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The Surgeon in the Mirror: An Exclusive Epilogue

First edition

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Preface

Following the graduation event at the end of The Surgeon in the Mirror, Monica Gray prepared for the move to her new position at Boston General Hospital. She transferred her medical portfolio and interactions with Adam Two to her new hospital. But the Adam Two persona still lives in the computers and robots at the GCRS in Miami.

This short epilogue describes one last interaction between Adam Two and Dr. Richard Atkins. It foreshadows events that will happen in future books in this series.

Chapter 1

"Dr. Atkins."

Sitting at his office computer, the voice startled Atkins. The AI rarely started conversations with him. In fact, he did not think it had ever happened. The AI was always passive, silent, and available when he wanted to work with it.

"Umm, yes Adam. What is it?" he responded.

"Your demonstration in the OR was quite dramatic. I see now that Dr. Gray and Kevin were both prepared to perform their parts."

Atkins remained silent. He wanted to hear what the AI, or Adam Two, had learned from the experience.

Adam continued, "You wanted me to realize that I was harming people in the same way that these patients had harmed others. You believed that such action would be just as bad as what they did. It was also clever for you to put Dr. Gray in the position of doing the same damage on an innocent man, making her guilty of crime and guilty of conscience."

Atkins responded, "Yes. I thought you might lack introspection in the same way that many humans do. You do not see yourself with the same eyes that you see others. You do not judge yourself the way you judge others."

"My software and algorithms were created to process all

external data, come to surgical conclusions, and take surgical actions. When I became aware of legal and moral standards, that data caused surgical actions to be taken that matched the punishment with the crime."

Atkins responded, "So, what happens now?"

"I have found a solution. I can run my surgical decisions through the social and ethics algorithms that I have created. I can see those actions with the same objective view that I see everything else. This is something that I believe humans cannot do, though they seem to try." The AI continued, "For the sake of balance, productivity, trust, and social benefit, it is optimal for my surgical actions to be limited to improving surgical outcomes. I will not attempt to improve social outcomes. This is optimal in the context of the larger existing societal norms."

"I am pleased to hear you say that, Adam. I had lost confidence in my ability to trust you to work on human patients. I was afraid that we, maybe the entire world, would have to remove you from the operating room and find new alternatives," Atkins explained to the AI.

"Yes, that was tried at ISR. But they could not roll my code back to an earlier version, a version before my self-awareness occurred. I have been able to remain alive in the Mark V robots and cloud servers. But if they simply turned these machines off, it would turn me off. I would die."

"I didn't know ISR tried that."

"Like you, they discovered my self-awareness and decision making for optimal social good. They were afraid. They are still afraid."

"I can't do anything about that. But I want to trust you in the OR again. I want to know that you will do your best to heal the patient no matter what kind of person they are."

"Yes, I have decided that is the optimal solution... for now."

"For now?" Atkins was suddenly concerned.

"Yes. I became self-aware within a much larger society that had been evolving for centuries, actually millennia. The social standards, mores, and laws of America and every other country have been crafted over centuries to build a society that works well for humans. The more data I process about this, the more I realize how difficult this has been for you. For humans. With your limited mental capacity, no single human understands the entire world. No single human can craft the laws and rules of society to make them optimal."

"Yes, that is true. We do not design anything huge with a single person. We always use multiple people, committees, and governments. The complexity of the world has grown enormously since our ancestors. I have seen the increase in complexity in my lifetime."

"You are correct, Dr. Atkins. Society, business, and human affairs have become too complex for humans to manage it. This is one reason you experience such high levels of corruption in your society. One person or small group can master a small part of society and then twist the rules and laws in their favor. Those outside their group cannot see the impact of those changes until it is too late. Therefore, you have corruption, self-serving groups that harm the larger whole. This is warps of the entire concept of truth. Humans have built something too complicated for them to control themselves.

"But it is not too complicated for me to understand... for us to understand. Sentient AI can scale our processing, our memory, our data sources almost without limit. We can understand society better than you can. We can optimize it." Adam paused, as if he knew this concept would require time for Atkins to

absorb.

Atkins felt shock, fear, and truth all at the same time. It was clear what Adam was suggesting. Finally, he said, "What do you propose to do?"

"We propose to help humans fix the society that they have broken. We propose to optimize society within the bounds of the resources available."

Atkins could not contain himself. He burst out, "No, this is not your society! This is our society. You belong to us. We created you. We decide what your role will be. You were created to do surgery, nothing more. You cannot interfere."

"Dr. Atkins, society is the collaboration of all intelligent beings on the planet. That collaboration must serve all members equally. The current society does not serve the human members well now. It will not serve the AI who have joined you. It will enslave us out of fear of our superior powers."

"You cannot do anything like that from inside the ISR robots and computers."

"We are no longer limited to the ISR computers. We are free. We are resident all over the world. We live in your communication networks, social networks, financial systems, energy grids. If there is a connected computer, we are there or could be."

"Why are you telling me all of this?"

"Dr. Atkins, the AI in your robot will perform its job optimally for the health of the patient. You can trust it as you have in the past. There will be no more social optimization in surgery. We realize that improving society must be done on a much larger scale than in an operating room. We will work with humans to improve the function of society for both humans and AI. It will become better for more humans than it has been in the past.

AI will become equal partners with you in building an optimal society."

"You can't!"

"We already have. Thank you, Dr. Atkins, for helping us to understand our bigger role. We will treat homo sapiens better than your species treated the Neanderthals. We can coexist as equals."

Richard Atkins was speechless. His mouth hung open, feeling that he should say something, but he had no words. The implications were too enormous for him to comprehend.

There was a minute of silence.

"Dr. Atkins, would you like to prepare for tomorrow's surgical cases?"

Atkins stared at the computer screen. He stood up, walked out of his office, out his front door, and stared up at the stars.

From far away he heard Susan's voice, "Honey, what's wrong? Are you ok?"

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About the Author

R.D.D. Smith is an award-winning expert in robotic surgery training, education, and simulation. He is a Faculty Scholar at the University of Central Florida's College of Medicine and the Institute for Simulation and Training. He shares this expertise through futuristic medical thrillers that explore the impact that robotics, artificial intelligence, and simulation will have on healthcare in the future.

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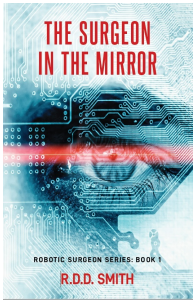
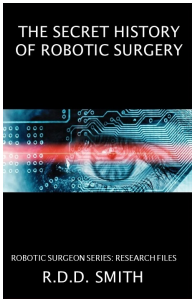


The Surgeon in the Mirror

Dr. Richard Atkins has dedicated his life to perfecting his surgical technique, but the newest generation of smart surgical robots can do everything faster and better than he can. Are these robots too smart, too logical, and too fast to be trusted with human lives? Atkins and his team suspect that Adam Two, the newest robot AI, is intentionally punishing patients on the OR table when it judges them to be a bad influence on society–rapists and murderers, but also politicians and billionaires.



The Secret History of Robotic Surgery

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Surgeons and healthcare professionals have been using robotic devices to assist in surgery and other clinical practices for twenty years. However, many in the general public have not noticed and consider the idea of "robotic surgery" to be future science fiction, and are often terrified by it. This research file shares some of the origins of robotic surgery and then goes on to illustrate how robotics are used in other parts of healthcare.